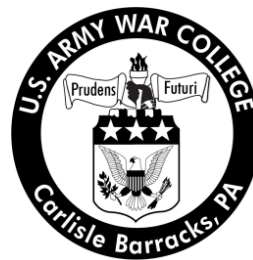


Strategy Research Project International Fellow

Boko Haram: Developing New Strategies to Combat Terrorism in Nigeria

by

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United States Army War College
Class of 2013

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Nigeria is currently faced with internal security challenges posed by the group “Jama’atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda’wati Wal Jihad,” also known as Boko Haram. Boko Haram’s objective is to establish Islamic rule in Nigeria through imposition of Sharia law throughout the country. Boko Haram’s insurgency is fueled by Nigeria’s history, geopolitical structure, ethno-religious composition and socio-economic disparities. The Nigerian government strategy in the past three years has focused on employment of kinetic solutions to end the insurgency with some successes. To overcome its present security challenges, the Nigerian government would need to refocus its efforts on a people-centric, community-based, intelligence-driven, whole-of-government approach to better police its borders, enhance interagency cooperation, improve the capacity of the security forces, and reform the criminal justice system. The government’s efforts should also aim to advance socio-economic development and leverage international assistance to end the insurgency.

Boko Haram: Developing New Strategies to Combat Terrorism in Nigeria

Every nation that seeks peace faces a common enemy today in global terror. The recent attacks in Mombasa remind us that Africa is on the front lines of the war against terror. All our citizens know the awful price of terror, and we will not rest until we have defeated terrorism in all its forms.

—President George W. Bush¹

Former United States (U.S.) President George W. Bush noted a decade ago that Africa was on the front lines of the war against terror. Nigeria is one of ten African countries affected by the spread of violent Islamic extremism in the last decade. The present violence in most parts of Northern Nigeria began in the mid-1990s when a group “Jama’atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda’wati Wal Jihad,” which translates to “people committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s teaching and Jihad,” began as a religious study group but later transformed into an insurgent group in 2002. The group which then called itself the “Nigerian Taliban,” engaged in low-level conflict with local police forces and established a camp tagged “Afghanistan” in remote areas of Borno State, in northeast Nigeria.² The group popularly known as “Boko Haram”, a Hausa phrase for “Western education is forbidden,” became more violent after its leader was killed by security forces in 2009.

About 3,000 people have been killed by Boko Haram in Nigeria since 2009, with nearly half the number killed in 2012 alone.³ Boko Haram was responsible for 136 out of 978 terrorist attacks in the whole of Africa in 2011.⁴ This represented more than a 300 percent increase from the 31 attacks Boko Haram carried out in 2010. There were over 200 attacks in 2012 including 151 bombings.⁵ The group has also become more vicious and daring in methods, scale of attacks, geographical reach and selection of targets. Government offices, places of worship, media establishments, security forces buildings, private companies, and

national and international institutions have been targeted by the group, including the devastating August 2011 attack on the United Nations Headquarters building in Abuja. Boko Haram as an ideological movement appeals to the impoverished masses exploiting social and religious fault lines in Nigeria. The group receives some training and financial support from external extremist groups to propagate its “focoist” strategy of utilizing urban terrorism to promote its aims and objectives.⁶ Boko Haram has become not only a threat to Nigeria, but also to Western interests and the international community as a whole.

The Nigerian government’s response to the Boko Haram threat has been mainly through the use of military force to fight the insurgency in Northern Nigeria. Nigeria’s security forces have achieved some successes in degrading the potency of Boko Haram in the last three years through the killing of some of the sect’s key leaders and the destruction of key operational cells. The inability of Boko Haram to extend its terrorist activities beyond the northern region is also a measure of the security forces’ success in curtailing the group’s activities. Other initiatives such as the Nigerian government’s attempt to dialogue with the group have not seen much progress. There also appears to be little international involvement in the fight against the group despite the threat to international interests posed by Boko Haram. Current U.S. President Barack Obama emphasized the importance of international cooperation in the fight against global terrorism when he noted that, “in an interconnected world, the defeat of international terrorism will require the cooperation of many nations.”⁷

Boko Haram is becoming stronger and the number, potency, and geographical reach of its attacks are increasing. This raises important questions as to whether the Nigerian government’s present strategy is adequate to address the problem and what

new strategies could be adopted to defeat the insurgency and restore peace to the affected areas. This paper will attempt to address these questions and offer broad policy options that could be applied at local, national, and international levels to confront Boko Haram's terrorist activities in Nigeria. This paper will also explore possible measures the Nigerian government could take to better police its borders, involve local communities in the fight against the group, enlist international support and assistance, and develop a better framework for interagency cooperation and coordination. New strategies to defeat Boko Haram must also enhance the capacity of security forces, reform the criminal justice system, and advance the socio-economic development of the country.

Defining the Threat

Nigeria's internal security challenges have roots in its history, geopolitical structure, ethno-religious composition, and slow socio-economic development. American Military University scholar Lawrence Cline identified British colonial rule and its forced merger of disparate ethnic groups to create Nigeria as a foundational cause for insecurity in Nigeria.⁸ The Nigerian Defence Academy Professor Etham Mijah observed that the structural imbalance in the ethnic, religious, regional, and political composition of Nigeria and the manipulation of such identities for political power is another reason for violence in the country.⁹ Northeastern University scholar William Miles asserted that politicians often create ethnic and religious identities to achieve political advantage.¹⁰ Other observers have attributed recurring violence in the country to economic inequality.¹¹ A poll conducted in 2001 showed religion (25 percent), socio-economic issues (22 percent) and ethnicity (18 percent) as the major causes of violence and insecurity in Nigeria.¹² Boko Haram appears to be fueled by all three factors while

political patronage, support, and funding by senior government officials who exploited it for electoral purposes contributed to Boko Haram's rapid growth and relevance.¹³

Obafemi Awolowo University Professor Abimbola Adesoji also argued that the introduction of Sharia law in some Northern states in 1999 conferred some form of legitimacy on the group.¹⁴

Nigeria has not experienced internal security challenges of the current magnitude since the end of its 30-month civil war in 1970.¹⁵ The success of the Iranian revolution in 1979 inspired an early threat to Nigeria's religious secularism by various groups, notably the Maitatsine sect which called for the imposition of Sharia Law in the country.¹⁶ The Maitatsine threat was repressed by the military government in May 1980 but re-emerged in the mid-2000s and still exists today in most northern states of Nigeria.¹⁷ Boko Haram appears to be a more violent mutation of these earlier groups. Boko Haram's ideological narrative describes a Nigerian version of the global jihadist agenda with deeper roots in Afghanistan and Pakistan.¹⁸

There are diverse opinions on the character, causes, and motivating factors for the Boko Haram insurgency. University of Kwazulu-Natal professors Hakeem Onapajo and Ufo Okeke Uzodike examined the phenomenon of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria at the individual, the state, and the international levels.¹⁹ The two scholars did not explore the role of the community as the identity base for Boko Haram to thrive. University of Massachusetts Professor James Forest also identified three layers of analysis but focused on motivating factors for members and sympathizers of Boko Haram, socio-political conditions that sustain the ideological spread and operational capabilities of the group, and the Nigerian government's counter-terrorism strategies in

recent years.²⁰ Forest acknowledged that communities and religious entities have considerable influence among potential recruits and supporters of the group.²¹

New York State University Professor Jean Herskovits casts doubt on the potency of the Boko Haram sect and characterized the group as “elusive and ill-defined threat” with no organization or ideological coherence.²² Herskovits attributed attacks to criminal gangs that have adopted the name to further their aims. George Mason University Professor John Paden views Boko Haram as a protest movement similar to the ones in Tunisia and Egypt that led to the Arab Spring.²³ Both scholars see Boko Haram as an outward expression of the “deep frustration and lack of hope among Muslim youth in northern Nigeria against a backdrop of widespread corruption.”²⁴ U.S. Department of State Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Ambassador Johnnie Carson observed that Boko Haram is not a homogenous organization with international reach but a domestic jihadist group out to discredit, disgrace and embarrass the Nigerian government, security organizations, and civil institutions.²⁵

Many other analysts disagree with the views of Herskovits, Paden, and Carson. Adesoji points to the spread and swiftness of Boko Haram’s operations, increasing membership, and successful challenge of the Nigerian State in the past decade as a measure of the group’s organization, commitment to its cause, and resilience.²⁶ The U.S. Intelligence Community has expressed concern over the sect’s intent and capability to strike Western targets in Nigeria, throughout Africa, and the U.S. Homeland.²⁷ U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) Commander General Carter F. Ham noted Boko Haram’s “expanding ambitions” and clear intent to coordinate and synchronize its efforts with other violent extremist groups.²⁸ The Foreign Minister of

Niger confirmed Boko Haram's link with AQIM at a regional security summit in Mauritania in January 2012.²⁹ The U.S. Department of State issued several public warnings to U.S. citizens through its diplomatic mission to Nigeria indicating the extent of the perceived threat posed by Boko Haram.³⁰ The U.S. government's designation of Boko Haram's key leaders as terrorists is consistent with the threat posed by the group. Many fear that the Boko Haram insurgency could lead to Nigeria's disintegration.³¹ The U.S. government could take a further step to declare Boko Haram as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) and deepen collaboration with the Nigerian government to end the insurgency.

Boko Haram's Strategy

Boko Haram's strategy is hinged on its external ideological alliances and its exploitation of fault lines in Nigeria's diverse population. The group has been linked with Al Qaeda and its affiliates such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Somali militant group Al-Shabaab, and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJIWA) for training and financial support.³² Kings College London Professor Kenneth Payne observed that Al Qaeda and its affiliated global Islamists had developed a focoist (violence and space) strategy similar to that advocated by Ernesto "Che" Guevara in the 1960.³³ This is true for Boko Haram which uses individuals, small groups, and autonomous cells to engage in urban terrorism to promote their ideology and win public sympathies through the utility of violence; a key focoist idea. The group employs various methods such as assassination of key individuals, bank robberies, attacks on military convoys, roadside bombings, and use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The group also uses suicide bombers to carry out attacks.³⁴ Boko Haram selects its targets in urban areas but depends on local support and collaboration to carry out attacks.³⁵

Boko Haram's sustained attacks on wide-ranging targets have had enormous impact on Nigeria's economic and social life, especially in northern Nigeria.³⁶ The group has been unable to carry out attacks in southern Nigeria. Boko Haram's attempt to ignite inter-religious sectarian violence through what Forest describes as "a strategy of provocation"³⁷ has so far failed.

The Nigerian Government's Strategy

The Nigerian government underestimated the threat posed by Boko Haram when the group began to be violent in 2002.³⁸ University of Ibadan Professor Nathaniel Danjibo observed that Nigerian Department of State Security reports in 2004 predicting on imminent Boko Haram attacks were treated with levity by some government officials.³⁹ The Nigerian government began to develop a coherent strategy to deal with Boko Haram's insurgency after widespread violence broke out in Borno, Yobe and Bauchi States in July 2009. This strategy focused on the employment of hard (military) power through kinetic operations against the radical extremist group. A joint military task force codenamed Operation Restore Order I and III was established in 2009 to conduct large-scale military operations in Borno and Yobe states where Boko Haram had strong bases.⁴⁰ The government also established new permanent military units in the two states.⁴¹ Another aspect of the current strategy adopted by the Nigerian government was the formation of the National Focal Point on Terrorism (NFPT) in 2007 but which became active in 2012.⁴² The focal point consisted of over a dozen security agencies and government departments responsible for the implementation of Nigeria's national security agenda.⁴³ The NFPT's activities were coordinated by the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), while the National Security Council, headed by the President, periodically met to review national security issues. The Nigerian government also

established a committee on security in North Eastern Nigeria. Government strategy also identified Nigeria's porous borders as transit routes for the movement of arms and insurgents and the Nigerian government temporarily closed the country's northern borders in early 2012.⁴⁴ The Nigerian national security strategy focuses on "public safety and national stability" and relies heavily on the use of modern technology for intelligence, surveillance, detection and informatics as the basis for its new counter-terrorism strategy and critical infrastructure protection.⁴⁵ According to ONSA, the Government strategy's objective is "to exploit advancement in technology to combat terrorism and heinous crimes."⁴⁶ The Government strategy also explored legal means to defeat the Boko Haram threat and terrorism in the country as a whole through the passage of the Terrorism Preventive Act (TPA) in June 2011.

Nigerian former National Security Adviser General Owoye Azazi stated in 2011 that Nigeria's security infrastructure was inadequate to deal with the Boko Haram threat.⁴⁷ The national security strategy therefore identified capacity building for security agencies as a key initiative for defeating Boko Haram and preserving national security.⁴⁸ Police and military spending increased to one-fifth of total government overlays in 2012.⁴⁹ This represents the largest amount Nigeria has ever spent on security. The Nigerian government also replaced senior leaders in the security services including the Minister of Defense, National Security Adviser, service chiefs, and Inspector General of Police in an attempt to reinvigorate the fight against the insurgents. The Presidency also created the position of national counter-terrorism coordinator in 2011.⁵⁰

Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo attempted to mediate between the Nigerian government and the group in September 2011. This which was followed by

the Nigerian government's offer of amnesty in October 2011 and a proposal for dialogue with the insurgents in January 2012. These initiatives have achieved little.⁵¹ Lack of progress in dialogue has been attributed by some scholars to Boko Haram's distrust for the Nigerian government and its insincerity in keeping promises and agreements.⁵² The leakage of details of the initial talks to the local media was another factor for breaking off contact, according to local media reports. The Nigerian government also established the Presidential Committee on Security Challenges in the North-East Zone (PCSCNEZ) under the chairmanship of Ambassador Usman Goji Galtimari. PCSCNEZ was tasked to investigate the remote and immediate causes of the Boko Haram insurgency and make recommendations to the government.⁵³

Assessment of the Nigerian Government's Strategy

This paper assesses the effectiveness of the Nigerian government's strategy based on trends in Boko Haram attacks from 2009-2012. This assessment took into account casualty figures, geographical reach, frequency and scale of attacks, and the successful prosecution of arrested Boko Haram suspects. The assessment concluded that security forces might have foiled numerous attacks before they were executed by Boko Haram but that the actual number of attacks was on the increase. The combined statistics for both foiled and actual attacks would confirm increased spread and capability of Boko Haram attacks. Table 1 illustrates that the Boko Haram insurgency is gaining rather than diminishing in strength.

Table 1: Statistics on Boko Haram Attacks from 2009 – 2012

Parameter	Year			
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Highest number of casualties in a single day	53 ⁵⁴	80 ⁵⁵	100 ⁵⁶	186 ⁵⁷
Total casualties attributed to Boko Haram attacks	226 ⁵⁸	234 ⁵⁹	590 ⁶⁰	Over 1000 ⁶¹
Total number of incidents	23 ⁶²	31 ⁶³	136 ⁶⁴	151 ⁶⁵
Number of states where Boko Haram has staged attacks	4 ⁶⁶	7 ⁶⁷	11 ⁶⁸	14 ⁶⁹
Farthest distance from Borno and Yobe States	Bauchi	Abuja	Abuja	Kogi/Sokoto
Number of individuals successfully prosecuted and convicted	NA	NA	1 ⁷⁰	NA

Sources: Forest, 2012; U.S. Department of State Country Report on Terrorism 2011; Institute for the Study of Violent Groups, 2011; and author's compilation from daily news sources.

The Nigerian's government's strategy has achieved some successes. Government forces have destroyed many of the sect's bases and IED-making facilities, especially in 2012. Nigerian security forces have also killed many Boko Haram members including some of its senior leaders. Nevertheless, Boko Haram is still potent, recruiting new converts and carrying out terrorist in 2013.⁷¹

The Need for New Strategies

A study conducted in 2012 by University of Benin Professor Iro Aghedo and Ambrose Alli University Professor Oarhe Osumah indicates that Boko Haram is a corollary of economic inequality, poverty, and radical ideology.⁷² The study also observed that Boko Haram's successful operations have been influenced by the influx of arms and illegal aliens through the country's porous borders, the low capacity of Nigeria's security forces, and the heavy-handed approach of some security forces. There is also evidence to suggest that socio-economic disparities and ineffective prosecution of Boko Haram suspects have complicated the government's efforts.

Integration of Military Power with Soft Power

Some analysts have faulted government's over-reliance on hard power and the security forces alleged heavy-handedness which in their view tends to alienate the public from the fight against Boko Haram.⁷³ The Nigerian government's declaration of a state of emergency in areas highly affected by the sect's activities gave the police and security forces enormous powers to search without warrants, arrest, detain, and impose restrictions on movements through the enforcement of curfews. These measures were reported by some observers to have contributed to human rights abuses.⁷⁴ The security forces' alleged strong arm tactics may be the result of a force in transition from many years of military rule. The security forces' use of excessive force may harm its reputation as one of the true national institutions, especially if such abuses are perceived to be directed at a particular ethnic/religious group in the country. Employment of heavy-handed tactics could erode public confidence and sympathy for security forces and deny government forces much-needed support to defeat the group. Use of the military for internal security duties also erodes the effectiveness of the

Nigerian Police Force (NPF) as well as exposes the military to the ethno-religious dynamics of these conflicts. The Nigerian government and security agencies should therefore adopt a people-centric, community-based approach to defeat Boko Haram by intensifying efforts to win the hearts and minds of those communities that harbor the extremists and are sympathetic to their cause. It is only by doing this effectively and over time that the Nigerian government can obtain the necessary access to information and intelligence on the sect and its activities.

Interagency Cooperation

Interagency rivalry and lack of coordination is a common feature of the Nigerian security architecture. Interagency rivalry is often caused by competition for resources, need for visibility, and quest for a favorable public rating of the agency's effectiveness. The unwieldy number of agencies that make up the NFPT made coordination of its activities difficult despite the centralization of oversight functions on the NSA. This multiplicity of organizations explains why the focal point did not operate more than four years after its establishment in 2007.⁷⁵ In a system with deep inter-service rivalry, it is not difficult to understand why some of the agencies worked to undermine and out-do each other. The parading of two different sets of suspects for the same crime by two different security agencies in mid-2012 is illustrative of this general rivalry and lack of cooperation.⁷⁶ Government ministries, departments and agencies vested with specific roles must develop a common framework within which they can identify their roles and develop the capabilities needed to perform those roles. Such a framework must address areas of interface such as policy coordination, intelligence sharing, integration of resources, and joint planning and conduct of operations. This common framework

should also designate an appropriate hierarchical structure that would foster decisive actions at critical times.

Border Control and Policing

The role of small arms, light weapons, and ammunition in fuelling conflicts and terrorism in Africa has attracted international concern since the mid-1990s in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.⁷⁷ The Nigerian government's strategy against Boko Haram identified the country's porous borders and their use as conduit for the influx of illegal arms.⁷⁸ The late Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf admitted the flow of weapons from Niger, Cameroon, and Chad to the group.⁷⁹ Recent conflicts spurred by the "Arab Spring" and the spread of violent extremism in the Sahel region have increased the problem of availability of illegal weapons in the hands of terrorists. Conventional small arms control programs such as embargoes, targeted sanctions, export and import regulations, and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) have not yielded positive results.⁸⁰ The success of such programs is imperiled in Nigeria where about seven million illegal weapons are in the hands of non-state actors and criminal groups⁸¹ due to weak institutions, local arms manufacturing capacity, corruption, and extensive land and maritime borders that are porous and undermanned.⁸²

Nigeria's 1,500-kilometer northern border with Niger is of particular concern due to prevalence of cross-border armed banditry and the influx of illegal aliens driven by protracted conflicts in neighboring countries such as Chad, Niger, Sudan, and Libya.⁸³ Boko Haram is known to have staging areas and temporary bases in the Zinder region of Niger along the border and daily utilizes several crossing points to transit towards Mali and Mauritania to link up with AQIM and other violent extremist groups for training,

finances, and weapons.⁸⁴ The plan by both countries to jointly patrol the border, which was first discussed in 2008, is yet to materialize. Such bilateral joint border patrol arrangements also exist with the Republic of Benin along Nigeria's western border.⁸⁵ The Nigerian government could employ reconnaissance drones to help monitor the borders at a lower human and material cost.

The issue of porous borders is not restricted to Nigeria's land borders. Activities of criminal groups engaged in the lucrative illegal oil bunkering and kidnapping businesses in the Niger Delta area have made the southern parts of the country an attractive destination for illegal arms traffickers.⁸⁶ Some of these weapons may have found their way to the northern parts of the country where Boko Haram is prevalent. There is also a need for the Nigerian government to be able to track, monitor and secure weapons recovered by security forces during kinetic operations Boko Haram.⁸⁷ Effective border policing would help prevent Boko Haram from gaining access to weapons and other forms of support from violent extremist groups in the West African sub-region.

International Support

The defeat of violent extremists groups is a global endeavor. Violent ideology is fast-spreading in Africa, stretching from the Horn of Africa to the Sahel and posing threats of transnational terrorism to Western countries. The failed attempt by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab to bomb Northwest Airlines Flight 253 over Detroit on December 25, 2009, further illustrates the spread of violent extremism and the interconnectedness of today's world. Abdulmutallab is the son of a wealthy Nigerian businessman, and was educated in Togo and England and radicalized by Al Qaeda in Arabic Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen. Boko Haram has also demonstrated the capability to attack international

targets and its cross-border reach. The August 2011 attack on the UN building in Abuja by Boko Haram in which 23 persons were killed is the most visible example of Boko Haram's capability and intent to strike international targets. Other countries' interests within Nigeria are at peril if Boko Haram and other violent extremist ideologues are not curtailed. The February 2012 kidnapping of seven employees of a construction company in Bauchi State by the group Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan, also known as Ansaru, illustrates this point.⁸⁸

Nigeria had enlisted international support during its previous periods of serious internal security challenges, such as during the Biafran Civil War in the late 1960s.⁸⁹ International support continues to be critical to the success of the Nigerian government's strategy to defeat Boko Haram. The Nigerian government has sought assistance from the US and other countries with technology, experience, infrastructure, and human capacity to deal with issues of insurgency and terrorism. The international community must act on this request and support the Nigerian government's current fight against Boko Haram. The U.S. is a key economic and security ally and partner with Nigeria and it must play a lead role in mobilizing international support for Nigeria in this area. Possible areas of assistance include training, equipment, and support in developing intelligence gathering and sharing capabilities, such as the creation of a fusion centre for intelligence sharing among Nigeria's law enforcement and security agencies.

Capacity Building of Security Forces

The Nigerian armed forces have taken great strides in terms of capacity building in the last three years. This is particularly true for the Nigerian Army. The army has trained thousands of military and police personnel in counter-terrorism and counter-

insurgency, established a canine-handling section to boost its forensic capabilities, and reorganized units and formations on the frontlines of the fight against Boko Haram in line with the Chief of Army Staff's vision of "transforming the army into a force better able to deal with contemporary challenges."⁹⁰ The same cannot be said of many of the other services, particularly the NPF, which suffers from poor training, low morale, obsolete equipment, and inadequate welfare and motivation.⁹¹ The police also lack surveillance and intelligence gathering capabilities.⁹² Most of the capacity building initiatives in the armed forces and security agencies have targeted only lower ranking personnel with little attention paid to senior leadership development. Over 5,000 lower-ranking security personnel were trained in counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency between 2010 and 2012.⁹³ Another 167 junior officers up to the equivalent rank of major were trained in 2012.⁹⁴ There is no evidence of coordinated counter terrorism training for officers of higher ranks. The fight against Boko Haram is therefore denied the necessary strategic input that could hasten the defeat of the sect. Training of military officers, especially in the senior service colleges of developed countries, such as the United States Army War College (USAWC), could expose senior leaders in the armed forces to global counter-terrorism and national security management best practices for the long-term success of the war on violent extremism. This aligns with the US Department of Defense's new focus on building partner capacity for a more secure world in the 21st Century.⁹⁵ The Nigerian military should explore additional vacancies (at least two at the USAWC) in senior service colleges that currently accept Nigerian military officers. The U.S. Department of State's Anti-terrorism Assistance program to

bolster the capacity of Nigeria's law enforcement agencies also should be expanded and sustained.⁹⁶

Criminal Justice System Reforms

Fair and quick dispensation of justice is essential not only in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency but also to promote individual justice, national cohesion, and socio-economic development. Nigeria's Attorney General and Minister of Justice Mohammed Bello Adoke decried lack of access to justice, delays in criminal justice, and long pre-trial detention of suspects at a national forum in November 2012.⁹⁷ Many members, sponsors, and sympathizers of Boko Haram including serving members of parliament have been arrested during counter-terrorism operations against the sect in the past three years but few have been successfully prosecuted and convicted.⁹⁸ The late Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf was arrested in 2006 and 2008 on allegations of incitement to violence and support for terrorism but was released without charges on both occasions.⁹⁹ Over 80 Boko Haram suspects are under pre-trial detention in Abuja alone.¹⁰⁰ More than 100 are awaiting trial in Kano.¹⁰¹ Hundreds of suspected Boko Haram members have been released from prison by well-orchestrated Boko Haram attacks on prisons while these suspects awaited trial.¹⁰² The speedy completion of trials would allow the prison authorities to move the convicted prisoners to more secure facilities.

Nigeria's Inspector General of Police Muhammad Abubakar attributed the delay in prosecution of suspects to the lack of enabling laws.¹⁰³ The Nigerian Senate disagreed and pointed to the Terrorism Prevention Act, which was enacted in 2011, as a recent example of such legislation.¹⁰⁴ Some analysts agree on the existence of appropriate legislation but blame lack of a designated lead agency in the Act for

investigation of suspected terrorist crimes.¹⁰⁵ There is also issue of corruption in the judiciary.¹⁰⁶ Criminal justice reforms should focus on eliminating long periods of pre-trial detention, lengthy trials, duplication of prosecutorial functions, and corruption in the judiciary.

Socio-economic Development

Nigeria is sub-Saharan Africa's second largest economy behind South Africa.¹⁰⁷ The Economist magazine projects that Nigeria's economy will be sub-Saharan Africa's largest economy in 2015.¹⁰⁸ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates Nigeria's economic growth in 2012 at 6.6 percent.¹⁰⁹ Nigeria is endowed with enormous human and natural resources but more than 60 percent of the population lives below the poverty line of \$1 dollar per day; an estimated 80 percent live on less than \$2 per day.¹¹⁰ Official government figures estimates that about 20 million Nigerian youths are unemployed.¹¹¹

Nigeria is a diverse country with nearly 400 ethnic groups.¹¹² This social diversity has presented management problems for the Nigeria's political class since independence.¹¹³ Inequitable distribution of power and resources among different regional, ethnic and religious groups has been a source of insecurity in Nigeria.¹¹⁴ Poverty is more endemic in the northern part of the country where geography and Islamic practices such as resistance to Western education, family planning, and medical vaccinations, and traditional lifestyles such as nomadic cattle grazing have exacerbated the effects of corruption, illiteracy, disease, and malnutrition resulting in poor living conditions and low life-expectancy.¹¹⁵ The report of the Presidential Committee on Security Challenges in the North-East Zone identified weak governance and poor service delivery despite huge revenue accruing to government as one of the major

causes of the Boko Haram insurgency.¹¹⁶ This coincides with reports of various studies which attribute human insecurity in Nigeria to corrupt, wasteful, and insensitive leadership.¹¹⁷ Former Borno Governor Ali Modu Sheriff and former Gombe Governor Danjuma Goje felt the need to apologize to Boko Haram for their actions against the sect while in office. This illustrates the role of leadership failures and poor governance in fuelling the insurgency.¹¹⁸ The Nigerian government's strategy against Boko Haram should address the socio-economic and governance issues that impoverish the population and provide a vast recruitment pool of unemployed youths for Boko Haram.

Conclusion

Boko Haram remains a potent threat to Nigeria's national security and the international community as a whole despite the Nigerian government's growing efforts to defeat the insurgency in the last three years. The number, sophistication, geographical range, and array of targets that have been successfully attacked by Boko Haram have increased since 2009. Boko Haram has also expanded its base beyond Nigeria's borders and established links with other violent extremist groups within the region and other parts of the continent. There are reports that Boko Haram received training from Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and MOJWA and that there were Boko Haram members receiving training with Ansar Dine in a Timbuktu training camp in Mali.¹¹⁹ The intransigence of the group has been a result of the group's increased operational capacity and the gaps in the current Nigerian government's strategy to bring the insurgency to an end. This paper has identified these gaps and offered suggestions to help confront the crisis.

The Nigerian government's reliance on hard power to fight Boko Haram has not optimized all elements of national power to bring peace and security to the affected

areas in the country. The government's strategy should aim at courting communities where the sect is known to have operational bases in order to deny them sanctuaries and gain useful intelligence that will enhance the security forces' ability to pre-empt the sect's plans. More effective border policing in the northern region would sever the links between Boko Haram and terrorist groups in the Sahel region such as AQIM and MOJWA thus disrupting influx of arms, training, and financial support to the group. It will also ensure that Boko Haram fighters trained in foreign bases do not gain access into the country to rejoin the insurgency.

The fight against international terrorism demands multi-level cooperation between nations with vast experience in counter-terrorism. Nigerian government's strategy should seek assistance from developed countries to employ appropriate capabilities in areas of capacity building, intelligence gathering and sharing, and senior leadership development to strengthen current efforts to end the insurgency. The government should also strengthen the criminal justice system to ensure speedy trial of persons engaged in terrorist acts in the country. The cyclic loop of recruitment of members to perpetuate the insurgency will not end unless government and private organizations rise to the challenge of reducing poverty, creating employment, developing infrastructure, and increasing literacy in the country, especially in the north where Boko Haram recruiters have access to the mass of jobless youth. There are no simple solutions to Boko Haram terrorist activities but a conscious attempt to meld hard power military operations with soft power within the elements of national power would speed the defeat of Boko Haram and return Nigeria to the path of peace and development.

Recommendations

The Nigerian government should:

1. Activate joint border patrols with neighboring countries particularly along the 1500-kilometer border with the Republic of Niger to control influx of arms and prevent Boko Haram and other groups from linking up with violent extremist groups in the Sahel region such as AQIM.
2. Purchase reconnaissance drones from foreign supplier countries to help monitor the border at lower cost.
3. Adopt a community-centric strategy aimed at denying Boko Haram members safe bases to plan and stage attacks.
4. Facilitate closer cooperation between domestic security agencies and other stakeholders to enhance intelligence sharing, integration, joint conduct of operations and policy coordination.
5. Modify the mode of operations of the domestic security forces to be more people-friendly so as to win the confidence of the people and enlist citizen support against Boko Haram and other groups.
6. Solicit help from countries with experience in counter-terrorism, such as the United States, for training and assistance with intelligence-gathering capabilities and equipment.
7. Request additional training vacancies in U.S. senior service colleges, especially the USAWC, to provide a global threat perspective to Nigerian officers dealing with counterterrorism issues.
8. Develop infrastructure and create employment to reduce poverty, increase literacy, and re-engineer socio-economic change.

9. Encourage foreign investment in labor-intensive industries such as manufacturing and agro-industry to create additional employment opportunities in vulnerable urban and rural areas.
10. Reform the criminal justice system to speedily prosecute arrested members of the Boko Haram sect and other groups and dispense justice in a timely and fair manner.
11. Enhance prison security to prevent the escape of suspected and convicted Boko Haram members and other criminals.

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¹¹⁵ Seventy-two percent of the population in the North lives in poverty compared to 23 percent in the South. See Council on Foreign Relations, "Backgrounder: Boko Haram." <http://www.cfr.org/africa/boko-haram/p25739> (accessed November 23, 2012).

¹¹⁶ Institute for Security Studies, "Nigeria: Security Situation Deteriorates as Government Lacks a Clear Response," *All Africa*, November 10, 2011. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201111100285.html?page=2> (accessed November 23, 2012).

¹¹⁷ Oarhe Osumah and Iro Agedo, "Benchmarks and Deficits: the Leadership Question in Nigeria," *Benin Journal of Social Sciences*, 19 (1-2), 2011, 104-115.

¹¹⁸ Adebisi Kayode Isaac, "Nigeria: Boko Haram Apology-Comic Relief or Collapse of State?" *Leadership Newspaper*, July 14, 2011, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201107140601.html> (accessed February 1, 2013).

¹¹⁹ Drew Hinshaw, "Timbuktu Training Site Shows Terrorists' Reach," *Wall Street Journal*, February 1, 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323926104578278030474477210.html> (accessed February 1, 2013).

